

## **EPA contractor to check parks, playgrounds for lead**

By Randy Petersen  
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Soil tests to determine the extent of lead contamination in Miami parks and school grounds are expected to begin soon.

Miami City Manager Michael Spurgeon said Environmental Protection Agency contractor CH2MHILL is expected to start follow-up testing by mid-February.

The Superfund contractor first sampled city parks, as well as streets and alleyways, in 2001. It released the results in June and CH2MHILL reported 65 of 92 samples taken showed lead levels above those that would require remediation in the Superfund site.

Shortly after the initial samples were taken, Miami city officials requested an expansion of the study.

The first samples taken were "grab samples" in which soil was taken in areas where lead could be seen. Spurgeon said CH2MHILL's follow-up will include a large variety of samples. "They said they may take 1,000 samples overall," Spurgeon said.

The city has approved access to all city parks for the follow-up sampling. Crews are also expected to test school grounds and will eventually seek permission to take samples at the city's daycare centers.

While residential sampling isn't planned for upcoming tests, Spurgeon said he's been told it could occur if a second phase of testing is needed.

For now, he said the EPA wants to concentrate on areas where children frequently play and could pick up lead from contaminated soil.

The initial test last year found lead levels above the 500 parts per million that would require cleanup in a Superfund site.

A Jaycee park sample measured 4,532 parts per million. In June, Spurgeon said that measurement was one of the reasons he asked for a more detailed study. He said there is no indication of where the sample was taken, meaning it could have been in the main part of the park or on the edges.

Identified soil contaminated in city parks was limited to Jaycee Park, B&PW Park and the city's baseball field. The B&PW park sample measured 947 parts per million, while CH2MHILL reported three tests ranging from 1,888 to 3,008 in the baseball field.

Three other park tests produced results under the 500 parts per million level. They were River View Park at 79, Rotary Park at 317 and an unnamed park area in south Miami at 375.

Spurgeon said he expects results of the next round of testing to be available in May.

"Then, we'll know what issues we could be facing," he said.

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